

MASS MEETING  
CALLED BY THE AMERICAN COMMITTEE  
FOR THE DEFENSE OF LEON TROTSKY,  
TO ANSWER HIS ACCUSERS.

At the Hippodrome, New York City,  
February 9th, 1937, at 8.00 p. m.

STENOGRAPHER'S MINUTES

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I, Julian J. Covell, a Certified Shorthand Reporter, do hereby certify that the foregoing is an accurate stenographic report, to the best of my ability under the circumstances, of the proceedings at a mass meeting of the American Committee for the Defense of Leon Trotsky, held at the New York Hippodrome, 43d Street and Sixth Avenue, New York City, beginning at about 8 p.m. on February 9, 1937. I cannot certify, however, to the accuracy or the spellings of many of the names appearing in this transcript, since I was obliged to guess their spellings from the sound of them and was unable to obtain a verification of them; nor can I certify to the complete accuracy of my report of some of the letters or telegrams, etc., read to the audience, because of the unsatisfactory conditions prevailing some of the time and because of the refusal of those in charge of the meeting to show me the originals, but I do believe my report of such quotations to be substantially correct.

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Subscribed and sworn to before me  
this 10<sup>th</sup> day of February, 1937.

*Morris J. [Signature]*  
MORRIS J. [Signature]  
NOTARY PUBLIC  
Kings Co. Clerk, New York  
Y. Co. Clerk, New York  
Commission Expires [Date]

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS AT MASS MEETING  
CALLED BY THE AMERICAN COMMITTEE FOR THE DEFENSE OF  
LEON TROTSKY, TO ANSWER HIS ACCUSERS, HELD AT THE  
NEW YORK HIPPODROME, 43RD STREET AND SIXTH AVENUE,  
NEW YORK CITY, ON FEBRUARY 9, 1937, AT 8:00 P. M.

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MR. GEORGE NOVACK: (8:22 p.m.) In the name  
of the American Committee for the Defense of Leon Trotsky  
I hereby call this meeting to order.

The purposes of the American Committee for the  
Defense of Leon Trotsky have been innocently misunderstood  
by some people and deliberately misrepresented by others.  
Its purposes are clear, definite, and simple. They are  
two in number: First, to secure and safeguard full  
democratic rights of asylum for Leon Trotsky. This task  
having been accomplished for the time being by his arrival  
and welcome in Mexico, the Committee's energies are now  
concentrated upon its second task, to promote the movement  
for the creation of an impartial committee of inquiry into  
the charges made against Trotsky at the Moscow trials. In  
the opinion of this Committee the responsibility for the  
creation of such a commission belongs above all to the  
organized labor movement and to qualify the individuals of  
unimpeachable standing and impartiality.

Who belongs to the American Committee for the Defense of Leon Trotsky? Such distinguished figures in American public life as

(\* Reporter's note: The spelling of the following names is not guaranteed, there being no opportunity given him to verify same.)

John Dewey and Norman Thomas, who were among its initiators. Its membership includes such people as John Dos Passos, Susan LaFollette, Benjamin Scholer, James D. Farron, George Chamberlain, Horace M. Glen, Dewey Lamb, Edmund Harrison, Harold Frazig, and many, many others. The Communist press has called the members of this Committee Trotskyites, in the same fashion as the Hearst press calls all people who rally to the defense of civil liberties in any case Reds. It is obvious to any informed and unprejudiced person that the overwhelming majority of this Committee and its members are non-Trotskyites and even anti-Trotskyites, so far as their political opinions are concerned. They are firmly united, however, in presenting the two principles upon which the Committee was organized - the cherished democratic right of asylum and the right of a man to be tried before an impartial tribunal before he is adjudged innocent or guilty.

The members of this Committee have been submitted to tremendous pressure from the Communist Party and its

sympathizers to give up their defense of the democratic rights in the case of Trotsky and to resign from this Committee. Five have resigned under this pressure, manufactured chiefly from misrepresentation of our aims and activities. Nevertheless, despite this campaign of malicious misrepresentation which has reached unbelievable heights in the past week, the overwhelming majority of the original members of this Committee have remained solid in their stand. (Applause.)

I wish I had the time to read the letters they have sent in our support. You may read them in our daily bulletins and in the press. The few defections from the Committee have been more than counter-balanced by additions within the past days. Ernst L. Meyer, columnist of the New York Post (applause), James Hasty(?), former managing editor of the Daily Worker (applause), Avon L. Harris, well-known Negro educator and Professor at Harvard University, Lewis Vunk (?), another novelist (applause), Richard Blodgett (?), the head of the Commonwealth College, and others. In addition the Committee has branches in all the principal cities of the country. The Chicago Committee is holding a big mass meeting on February 14th at which Norman Thomas will be the principal speaker. Other meetings are being held shortly in Boston, Newark, and throughout the west.

A note has just been passed up to me that W. E. Woodard, author of "The Lives of Washington and Grant," and of a new American History, and Helen Woodard, author of "Through Many Windows" and "Street Lights," have just the Committee for the Defense of Leon Trotsky (loud applause). I believe they are in the audience here and we hope that they will be followed by many in the audience here tonight and their friends who will receive the message that is going to be spoken to them here.

This meeting and all others held under the auspices of the Committee has only one purpose, and I wish to repeat this, so that no one can misunderstand me. This Committee has only one purpose - to promote the movement for the creation of an impartial committee of inquiry into the charges made against Leon Trotsky at the Moscow Trial. (Applause.) We have a single slogan - Let the Truth be Known (applause). How can anybody be against the truth? Certainly Trotsky's testimony indispensable if we or anyone else are to uphold the truth and arrive at an informed judgment on this case, which has so perplexingly disturbed the entire world. Up to now it has been impossible for Trotsky to get the hearing which he has demanded over and over again. For many months he was the virtual prisoner of Norway. Scarcely had he arrived in Mexico City when Piatakov-Radek trials were suddenly staged. He has asked

that the Soviet Government demand his extradition, so that he can have his hearing. They have not yet dared to do so. Trotsky's voice is suppressed in many countries. His words are distorted in our country, especially by the Hearst press, to whom Trotsky refuses to give any statements or press releases whatsoever. (Applause.) What they print - and they do print a great deal under his name - is obtained secondhand or stolen.

There is only one way in which Trotsky can have his day in court, and that is through the kind of commission which we advocate. One can hardly believe that all this audience is composed of Trotskyites. There are no doubt a great number of Trotskyites here. There are no doubt a great number of people here who have no sympathy with Trotsky's political views but who have come to express their agreement with our purpose in aiding the establishment of a commission of inquiry. There are no doubt others here who have no fixed opinion on this subject whatsoever, and one may hope there are still others who disagree with this Committee but who have come here tonight to hear its viewpoint and Trotsky's words in his own behalf, in order to see whether they need revise their views in any way. We welcome each and every category of such people and each and every individual who comes to find out the truth. This is as it should be. There are places in the world - I need not

go into detail of conditions in Germany and Italy - where Trotsky could not possibly speak or even remain out of prison for a moment, if his life was spared. There are places in the world where we could not meet even to discuss this question here tonight. In New York City, however, it is still possible to hold meetings of this kind. (Applause.) And we intend to hold them. (Loud applause.)

The Communist Party has been holding meetings virtually every day in the past week, at which our Committee has been vigorously denounced, if you will pardon me an understatement. Not a few of our members and sympathizers have attended these meetings and held their peace. We are glad indeed that despite certain undercover attempts which were publicly applauded by the Hearst press in Washington, that the Federal Government has not attempted to interfere with this meeting. However, certain incidents and reports throughout the past week forecast attempts to disturb the progress of our meeting here tonight. We can only join in the hope of the American Civil Liberties Union, whose delegation of observers we have here, (Applause) and of the representative trade union leaders, whom we have invited to attend (applause), that the meeting will proceed quietly and according to schedule and that nothing will happen here tonight which will redound to the discredit even of our name and transfer to these shores the practices



which have made Hitler's name infamous to every friend of civil liberties. (Applause.)

In the corridors of this theatre there is on sale all the literature available in English on the Moscow Trial, those published by the Communist press, their sympathetic official and unofficial press, and that published by all other shades of opinion. I wish to call your attention particularly to a pamphlet published today by this Committee. It is entitled "World Voices on the Moscow Trial." It is a compilation of liberal and labor opinion as it has been expressed in the most representative journals throughout the world. The price is 15 cents. We ask you to buy it and find out for yourselves exactly how the liberal and labor world has reacted to the trial.

The chairman of this meeting is Professor Emmett E. Dorsey (applause), Acting Head of the Department of Political Science in Harvard University, scholar and outstanding intellectual leader in the negro world. I take great pleasure in presenting Professor Dorsey to you. (Loud and prolonged applause.)

PROFESSOR DORSEY: Ladies and gentlemen, as an American Negro it would be --

VOICES: Put the lights out. Lights out.  
Lights out (referring to bright floodlights).

PROFESSOR DORSEY: I shall begin again, so I will

say the thing which is by now, I suspect, quite obvious. As an American Negro (laughter) it would be quite impossible for me to be opposed to Communism. I could not be an enemy of the Soviet Union. (Applause.) However, if I find some hope for my people in Communism, this hope must be predicated upon the assumption that not only will Communism release the masses of folk from economic slavery and also rid the world of racial prejudice, but also Communism will make possible real democracy; I mean democracy for the great masses, the workers.

I have been in Russia. I have traveled extensively in Russia. I have investigated as well as I could racial treatment in Russia. As far as I can find out, Russia is the only country in the world in which there is a constant consecutive fight being made against racial prejudice. (Applause.) However, ladies and gentlemen, despite these unbelievable magnificent things that have been achieved in Russia, there are today certain practices which as American it seems to me we cannot condone. It is significant to me that precisely the best brains, the most distinguished architects of the Revolution, by a combination of circumstances find themselves in a position such that it is demanded that they oppose Stalin. This, ladies and gentlemen, must mean, because for years these individuals have carved out the history in the revolutionary movement

in Russia, which definitely proves that they have more than dedicated their lives to the cause for which the new Russian Society was instituted - it must mean that there is something in this Stalinist regime that cannot be supported by precisely the most distinguished of the old Bolsheviks. (Applause.)

Obviously I do not know all of the intricacies of Russian politics, but to me it is apparent that there is a movement in Russia by the articulate in that country for democratic processes, and this movement is not allowed to express itself. I do not understand the intricacies of Trotsky's policies as they have developed through the years, I am not a Stalinist nor a Trotskyite nor an "ite" of other names which I cannot pronounce, but as an American who has lived in the South I have learned to hate and to fear such practices as are now current in the Soviet Union. (applause). Therefore I raised my voice against the Moscow trials, (Applause) and the subsequent activities of many folk over the world and ask with many of us that the revolution achieve its only legitimate objective, namely, democratic organization of society as well as economic reform (applause), therefore I ask that Leon Trotsky be given his day in court (applause).

I wish to read a letter from Dr. Avon L. Harris of my university, whom I think to be the most distinguished social scientist of the Negro race and also one of America's most distinguished Marxist students. He could not be here, and the letter runs as follows: (Reporter's note) (This letter was reported under difficult hearing conditions and was not checked with the original.) "To the Committee on the Defense of Leon Trotsky: I regret that I am unable

to be with you tonight, but I wish to assure the Committee that it has my support. Nothing that I have read about the recent trials in Moscow, whether it has emanated from the pen of the erstwhile impartial Duranty in the New York Times (laughter and boos) or from the Soviet Embassy at Washington, convinces me that Trotsky, co-leader with Lenin of the Russian Revolution, is guilty of plotting to assassinate the leaders of the present Russian regime or conspiring with Japan and Germany for the overthrow of the regime and of the partitioning of Russia and of widespread Russian sabotage. Even if Trotsky has wanted to do these things, it seems incredible that he could have planned them for such a long time without detection by the Russian Secret Police.

When I was in Russia last July there was no indication, even amongst Trotsky's bitterest opponents, that they considered him to be such an arch-conspirator, although the official spokesman of the ruling clique branded him as the enemy of the state and described Trotskyism as the vandal of the Russian Revolution and the betrayer to bourgeoisie.

It is incumbent upon us who live in one of the few democracies of the world and who in face of extreme opposition have in the past sought to build up friendship in this country for the new Russia, to demand that Trotsky

be given a fair hearing before an International Court. Simple human decency and common justice dictates it. It is not simply that Trotsky must be given an opportunity to exonerate himself, but that the faith in the new Russia -- faith in the new Russia - must be preserved in this country. (Applause) This faith, I assure you, is being shaken by the sanguinary madness of the present rulers, and by what appears to be an attempt to prevent independent criticism and to defoul and block out the names of such men as Trotsky from the pages of Russian history. Avon L. Harris (applause).

Ladies and gentlemen, our first speaker tonight is Mr. Roy Burt, of Chicago. He is the new secretary of the Socialist Party. He has chosen this auspicious important occasion to come for the first time before the New York public. Mr. Burt. (Applause)

MR. ROY BURT: Mr. Chairman and friends, I count it a privilege tonight to speak as a Socialist, reaffirming the historical position and attitude of the Socialist Party in relation to the Soviet Union. In other years we have fought for the Soviet Union as the hope and inspiration for the workers of the world, and through these years we have been tremendously concerned, and now, because the hope and the outlook and the prosperity of the workers of the world are involved, in the issues that are before us.

As I say, I count it a privilege to speak tonight, not alone on the issues which are before us for our consideration. No man or woman can state the fact today that lines are being sharpened, that world forces of reaction are steadily gaining strength in their effort to obstruct the progress of the common worker, without a realization of the fact that if for the time being Leon Trotsky should have been granted political asylum in Mexico, yet there is still the belief that everywhere workers shall be aroused to the tremendous importance of establishing that basic right for all men and women who lift their voice in protest against conditions as they exist, for we shall face that struggle again and again and again, and only as we stand united with the determined effort to maintain that right at all costs dare we think or plan for anything looking toward a change of society as it now lives. So I repeat, it is basic that we shall here again express our determination to establish for all throughout the world that right of political asylum (applause).

Again we come this evening - let me repeat: I speak from the historical point of view of the Socialist Party. For long years we demanded recognition of the Soviet Union. We have in season and out of season looked to the Soviet Union as a clear demonstration of the capacity and the ability of the workers to end exploitation, to

emancipate themselves, to build in the here and now a world of security and hope. (Applause) We have, I say, been cheered and we have rejoiced in the achievement thus far, and when tonight as Socialists we face the situation as it is in the world, we find ourselves tremendously concerned.

Think back in the days when Leon Trotsky and Lenin together were conducting the Russian Revolution and laying the foundation for a new society there. The Socialist Party lifted its voice, pointing out the tremendous importance in any society builded by workers that the principles of democracy and the rights of minority groups should be preserved and protected (applause). We have not swerved from that position a single moment and we still say tonight that this basic principle is essential.

No longer do men talk about the Russian experiment so far as the economic problem is concerned. In the Soviet Union they have demonstrated beyond any question the ability of workers to utilize the powers of production to provide economic security for the great mass of people. That no longer is an experiment; it is a demonstrated fact. We have faced in these later years the more basic challenge to the thing which workers want today. We have faced that question as to whether or not, having achieved a measure of victory in the economic realm, they can go forward and build a society in which the rights of workers can find



full expression adequately maintained, and today we find in the world a most serious problem facing us, for if there is one thing that creates grave concern, it is the attack - the workers have demonstrated that they can stand against the attack of the brute force of the capitalist world with heroism unmatched; our brothers are demonstrating that in Spain today (applause). They have demonstrated their power and capacity to stand against the relentless brute force of the capitalist society, but a new attack is being made, an attack that is most vital, an attack that is most serious. The question is being raised that workers lack the capacity to rule themselves, that they lack the capacity and ability to build their own organization, to control it, and to control it in the interest of those high ideals and those conceptions of equity among workers of freedom and liberty without which economic security has no adequate meaning and no satisfactory solution to the problem. (Applause) There is growing in the world that belief that the workers cannot be trusted, that in crises they are not equal to the situation, and I point out to you today, in a matter when we are faced with this tremendous obligation of building an adequate labor movement, of answering the challenge of General Motors, of answering the challenge of the Steel Corporation, of building a labor movement that shall have within it 20, 25 or 30 millions of organized workers.

The big attack that is being made even today is that workers do not have the capacity, that they cannot be trusted, that you will have a bureaucratic leadership that completely dominates the rank and file of the workers in any kind of movement which they bring about.

In the international field great credence is given to the charge against workers by the tragic thing which has taken place in Russia in the last year or so, and the Moscow trials are being used not only in America but around the world as evidence of the fact that workers cannot build for themselves their own government and their own society. I state to you that much more important, much more vital, and much more serious than a difference of political opinion or theory between two men or two groups - much more important is the reaction that is taking place upon the world, so far as the great mass of workers is concerned, and because workers everywhere are vitally affected by what is now taking place, it is of extreme importance that all of us clearly and definitely make known our position and our attitude at this particular time.

I say not only is it important, so far as the workers are concerned throughout the world, because of this fact, this lack of faith in the capacity of workers to build their own government, but with it we face the question, and we face it frankly: Is it to be given to one man or one

set of men to discover for all time the most adequate and complete solution to our problem, or are workers to build a society that can provide for a difference of opinion, for a minority, so that there can be in that world of economic security and well being that freedom, that freedom for difference of opinion, that maintenance of civil liberties, that maintenance of these fundamental and basic rights without which society has no hope and no meaning?

Again it becomes tremendously important, for none of us today can go into the merits of this case in the sense that on the basis of reports we are able to determine all the facts that are involved, an occurrence that has produced the utmost confusion throughout the world, that asks us to believe almost unbelievable things, for which there is no and has been at the present moment no adequate explanation.

I am not speaking for the Committee but it is my privilege to speak as a Socialist. What we ask is this, that there shall be at this time a most thorough and complete effort to produce and to hold an impartial investigation, that a commission representing the International Labor Movement, that a commission representing the Labor Movement of the World that across the years have looked with hope and eagerness to what was taking place in Russia - that an impartial commission made up, if

you please, of representatives of the labor movement of known sympathy for the Soviet Union, shall enable us to know the facts - a full and impartial investigation.

Can we ask less? Can we look forward to less? What hope is there for the world, what chance is there in building a great new world, unless it is possible in a crisis like this, in a situation which affects far more than the Soviet Union, which affect every man and woman in the world in whose heart there beats any response to basic justice, in a situation that affects the hopes and dreams of the exploited workers around the world, it is essential with this great group that in the Soviet Union there shall be a demand that there be a full and impartial investigation, so far as it is humanly possible, and that the facts shall be - that a commission shall be created and that so far as possible these facts shall be provided for the people of the world.

With this I close, and I speak now because of what the Soviet Union has meant to the workers of the world, workers everywhere, regardless of race, color and creed. As they have viewed this tremendous emancipation of workers their hearts beat with new hope and new aspiration. They have looked forward eagerly with a new realization of what workers can do. Now that dream and that hope has been blighted. A pall lies over the hopes of the workers of

the world. We are tremendously concerned. I seek as an Internationalist, as one of the common lot of workers, who are bound up together. We stand or fall together, and as a member of the group that supports it with enthusiasm the Soviet Union (applause).

Upon the part of workers of the world, on behalf of the International Labor Movement, I appear for the creation of this Committee that shall give us a full and impartial investigation. We can do no less. We must do that or we must say there is no hope or future for the workers of the world. Thank you. (Applause)

PROFESSOR DORSEY: Ladies and gentlemen, I have the distinguished pleasure to present Angelica Balabanoff, a friend and co-worker.

(Loud and prolonged applause.)

MISS BALABANOFF: Friends and fellow workers, when about fifteen years ago I decided to resign from the secretaryship of the Communist Internationale, to which I had been appointed by Lenin and Trotsky (applause) I believed and have believed ever since then and I believe now that certain methods used would lead the International Labor Movement to the point where it is unfortunately today, and when during these years I would realize that all the individuals, hundreds and thousands, and I should say millions of workers, who went out of the Communist

Internationale, disgusted by these methods didn't want to join it, it just told me that I had been right in my prediction; but I was not sorry, I was happy. I had confidence that history should say that I was wrong and the others were right, but I must say to you and we who understand it that never in my life did I feel so ashamed and so humiliated as I have been today.

Of course, it is not the first time in my life, comrades, that I tried to raise my voice with the voices of those who protest against slavery and against the lies of autocracy. It is not the first time that I tried to help those who protest against persecutions, and I considered it a duty and a privilege of Socialism, and therefore I am Socialist, to be always with those who are in need, to be always with those who have to defend their ideals or have to defend their rights and their labor and have not the possibility to do it.

It is not the first time. When I was a young girl and had joined the Socialist movement I learned to speak at National and International Socialist Conventions throughout the whole world. I tried to raise public opinion against the persecutions and against assassinations of Jews in Russia. I tried to denounce to the whole world what war was. From the very first moment that humanity was accursed and put in the danger of Fascism I have tried to raise my voice and to

denounce to public opinion and to the working class particularly what Fascism meant to the whole world; but, comrades, never in my life did I feel as ashamed as I do today.

Whenever I had to rise and speak out against the injustices, I suffered with those who were the victims of this treatment, but I was not ashamed, because in my conscience, just as I tried to rouse the consciences of those who listened to me, I knew that there was a gulf, because it was privileged society who made such crimes against humanity possible, and there was the ideal of Socialism which I dreamed of and for which I am fighting; but today, comrades, I can no more hope that those who listen to me shall believe me, after what is going on in Russia. (Applause)

Even if I had more time at my disposal than I have tonight, I would not try for one single moment to prove to you that those who have been assassinated and those who are at the Communist trials are not guilty of the crimes for which they have been assassinated. I would not do it, comrades, because it would be an insult not only to Socialism, not only to the labor movement, not only to you, not only to me, but to the poor victims, and if I for a single moment believed that one of those single accusations made has been proved, it would be the greatest shame and

the greatest humiliation. It would be a humiliation not only for those who believed, who are the victims, but for those who are dead defending Socialism, defending human liberty.

I am not here even to defend Trotsky, much less than the others who are deprived of the possibility to raise their voices. He can defend himself. He is not such a fool. He will have the honor, and you will listen. I have pointed out here that I am not a Trotskyist. On the contrary, those who followed my leadership here in this country know I don't belong to any political movement, but as far as my work is concerned, as far as my socialistic activity in the Internationale is concerned, I am against the actions of Trotsky, against certain methods. I will tell you more: I am not even on very friendly terms with him. I want to say that among the hundreds and thousands of human beings, men and women, in different countries, with whom I had the privilege to work - and I have much more friends than Trotsky - I have never exchanged a single letter with him during his exile, because most of us are very busy, and I am sure I cannot tell you that this terrible thing has taken place, without the possibility to fight for our political rights, for the political rights and for our ideas. Most likely I shall not ever stand on the same platform with Trotsky and Trotsky shall never



stand on the same platform as me, because I am a Socialist.

(Applause and laughter)

Well, comrades, I have the privilege and I want to tell you only one thing: All those who are here in this audience, you have the right to ask what the truth is. You need the truth. You can't live without truth. There will be no human society if those who live together don't know who is who and what is what, and therefore you have the right that everybody shall be heard, and I ask you to insist upon it, because it is your right, because it is also the right of the Russian people, of the Soviet countries. The Soviet country doesn't want slaves, doesn't want to be blackened. The Soviet country has to be known, and what is true has to be told. It is not the Russian people alone who should know what the conditions are or who are asking a persecution of Revolutionists. The Russians have never asked the execution of everybody. I assure you, comrades, as a witness, that it unfortunately - I hope it should never occur - if unfortunately Russia would be between this danger of those who threaten her today, those who would resort to war against her, you would need to defend Russia, Russia would need to be defended by someone else, and at this very moment if the Russian people could speak they would most likely say, "We want Trotsky back. We want Trotsky back." (Loud and prolonged applause.)

MR. NOVACK: On behalf of the News Reels of the Committee we wish to request a favor of you. It is essential for our purpose that the News Reels of this meeting be shown throughout the country. I know it is a little bit unpleasant. When they turn the lights on some time between 9.45 and ten o'clock they will turn the lights on for four minutes, if you will be kind enough to oblige them by not asking them to be turned off, they will be able to take the pictures.

PROFESSOR DORSEY: Ladies and gentlemen, this Committee is made up of folks who believe in democratic processes. Some of these people are avowed Trotskyites and have carved out a distinguished career as Trotskyists. One of the leaders of the Trotskyist movement of this country is Max Shachtman. Mr. Shachtman returned from Mexico with word from Trotsky, and Mr. Shachtman will now address you. (Loud applause.)

MR. MAX SHACHTMAN: Friends and comrades, I want first of all to bring to you from Mexico the greetings of the man who under the most furious and sustained hailstorm of abuse and calumny ever in history remains today in the twelfth exile he has experienced imbued with the same unflagging devotion to the cause of the working class as in the days twenty years ago when he was preparing side

by side with Lenin the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of the first Soviet Republic. I bring to all those who have not been poisoned by the venomous agitation carried out against Leon Trotsky his expression of gratitude. I hope you will join with him in expressing gratitude to the Mexican people and the President of its government, John Cardenas for having stood out among all the other nations in firmly upholding the right of asylum to political refugees. (Applause)

Let me say at the outset that I do not speak from this platform as a totally unbiased person who has not made up his mind concerning the matter we are discussing here tonight. It would be sailing under false colors for me to pretend that I have no firm convictions on the Moscow trials. On the contrary, I have studied all material made available by the partisans of the prosecution and all of it in the archives of Leon Trotsky, and this study has led me to the deep conviction that neither Trotsky nor the old Bolsheviks who were tried and sentenced are guilty of a single one of the crimes of which they are accused.

I speak here, therefore, not only as a vigorous supporter of the American Committee, but - and I say it proudly - as a friend and supporter of the most fiercely hunted Revolutionist in the world, Leon Trotsky. (Applause)

It is not, however, with the differences between Trotsky and his opponents that I want to deal here tonight; it is with other matters. It is not only his greetings that I bring you from Mexico; I am compelled also to report the position taken by the Communist Party of Mexico, and I report it to you with a feeling of shame and humiliation, that the party who is acting in the name of a movement to which I once belonged, like its brother parties everywhere else, - the Communist Party of Mexico actively opposed the granting of the right of asylum to Trotsky. This position alone was disgraceful enough. One would think it played sufficiently into the hands of all those reactionary forces throughout the world for wiping out of democratic rights, the right of asylum for political refugees included; but now the Communist Party in Mexico has raised the demand of the Mexican Government that Trotsky be deported from the country. (Boos and applause)

While I was there it was reported that with Trotsky only just a week in the country, on that morning the Secretary of the Communist Party of the country had presented a petition to the President demanding the deportation of Trotsky, and to influence this the Communist Party organized a demonstration attended by no more than 300 persons in Mexico City, at which all the speeches reiterated the demand that Trotsky be sent out of Mexico.

In this they were merely echoing the demands made by the semi-official and unofficial organs of the Fascists, the Gold Shirts of Mexico, and of ex-President Plutarco Elias Calles, the leader of reaction in the country. I could read to you, if time were at our disposal, the articles of the Fascist press of Mexico. It is absurd to repeat the headlines that Trotsky's presence will enhance Communist agitation. They demand his exile from the country. Another reactionary Fascist journal makes exactly the same demand.

Just stop to think for a moment the reactionary significance of this course of action. It is motivated by the argument that Mexico and the Soviet Union, both being friendly members of the League of Nations, that League of Nation members cannot tolerate in their borders a man who is attacking a member of the League of Nations; consequently a member of the Soviet Union, that is to say, a member a Stalin's country, is an undesirable alien. Now, for years in Mexico, for twenty years or more, there have been American exiles, opponents of American Imperialism in Latin America. The United States on raising this argument could have demanded that Mexico deport American revolutionists who had taken refuge in Mexico. Cuba, as reactionary a place as you could find, could have demanded

of Mexico, a friendly government, the deportation of William Antonio Emilo, the leader of the Cuban Communists, who took refuge in that country and was finally assassinated by Cuban reactionary terrorists. Today opponents of Col. Batista who have taken refuge in Mexico, it could be demanded that they be deported into the hands of the Cuban reactionaries.

Take the United States! How many Italian workers have we in New York who are confirmed and everlasting anti-Fascists who are engaged in one way or another in a struggle against Mussolini's regime? Italy is still formally a member of the League of Nations. Could the Communist Party of United States support a demand for the deportation of the Italian anti-Fascists from the United States because they are engaged in propaganda against the Italian regime? Could it in other countries demand similar deportations, such as from Czechoslovakia and France and Switzerland of Italians and Germans who are in Czechoslovakia and France and Switzerland and other countries, on the basis of this precedent? They could. All they have to refer to is the fact that the Communists themselves proposed a similar demand.

Since when does the labor movement demand deportation of any member from a country? What precedent is there in the history of the movement for the campaign against

Trotsky in any country at any time by any section of the Labor Movement? None. (Applause) Let us assume for a moment that there is an element of truth in this utterly fantastic persecution of Trotsky in the various states; when did the Communists ever demand the deportation from China, Turkey, Czechoslovakia, France and the United States, the principal centers since 1918 of White Guard Russians actively engaged in conspiring for the overthrow of the Soviet Union - the deportation of this or that or the other man or group of men? Never. They never did it, because it has not been the weapon or slogan of the working class; it is a weapon of the reactionary class, and the working class can only perish by taking it over.

I say to the backers of this campaign: "Take care that in your mad campaign against Trotsky that you do not become the unwitting agents of reaction. More than that, regardless of your views or affiliations, take care that it does not lead you to complete discreditation not only of the Soviet Union but of the very principles of Socialism and the Labor Movement themselves."

These are the things with which we are concerned, and not merely the justice for one individual, even if that individual be named Trotsky. It is these things that are involved in the two Moscow trials of August, 1936,

and January, 1937, and the trial in Novosvirsk(?), Western Siberia, which was organized in between the two principal trials, because if it can be proved that the trials were not genuine, that there was a miscarriage of justice, that the defendants were not guilty, then all the moral prestige of the Soviet Union, its leadership and the ideal of Socialism associated with it, will have been smashed in the eyes of world opinion in general and of the Labor Movement particularly. Take note of that.

And the second trial, which has just culminated in the shooting of thirteen of the defendants and sentences from eight to ten years imprison for the other four; was anything ever more incredible to the human mind? Thinking persons suspect it is more ominous in its general significance than the trial of Zinoviev and his friends almost six months ago. Let me give you a few examples of why it is impossible for any reasoning person acquainted at all with the Labor Movement to believe the so-called voluntary confessions made at the trial. I will give you an instance or two. Take the ingenious plot to kill Molotov, Chairman of the Council of People's Commissary of the Soviet Union; he was not mentioned at the first trial. Nobody mentioned him. The second trial was calculated to remedy the oversight. (Laughter) In Western Siberia there was a plot to kill him.



Now, here are the various versions, and you can take your choice of any of them or dismiss all four. The Manchester Guardian for January 26 reports as follows: Shestov, one of the defendants in the second trial, told the court of a plot to kill Molotov, President of the Council of People's Commissaries, arranged last year. "Arnold" - he was also a defendant - "had volunteered, Shestov continued, to drive Molotov's car over a cliff, but he changed his mind at the last minute, drove home, and went to a Caucasian resort." (Laughter) That is one. Vyshinsky, the prosecutor, summarizes this episode, according to the Daily Worker of January 30, as follows: "But Arnold has one quality which these Trotskyist plotters did not take into account, namely, cowardice \* \* \* \* \* he organized the assassination of Comrade Orjenikidze, but to our great fortune he got cold feet at the last minute and failed.

"The assassination of the Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars, Comrade Molotov, was organized, but to our great good fortune, our greatest good fortune, he again got cold feet and again failed." (Laughter)

I should think that would be enough. There is another. On November 23, 1936, in reporting the Novosvirk(?) trial, the Daily Worker had the following to say: "After planning Eichel's(?) murder we prepared for

our biggest coup, the assassination of Molotov. He," referring to Orjonikidze(?), "was to murder Molotov in a mine or to wreck Molotov's automobile. He chose the latter alternative. A terrorist named Arnold was chosen the cahuffeur, but he bungled the job. The car was traveling too slowly. It overturned, but Molotov was not killed." (Laughter)

Then you have the final version. Others may exist—I know of only four - from Pravda of November 23, which says as follows about Arnold's attempt on Molotov's life: "Only the extreme vigilance of the Chekha, GPU, prevented the carrying out of this attempt" (applause)

Now, look: in the first place, why didn't the Chekha, which prevented this attempt in 1934, say anything about it until 1936? (Laughter) Secondly, just wherein did its vigilance manifest itself? (Laughter) Silence, an unimportant trivial, a detail (laughter); thirdly, why wasn't this gentleman named Orjonikidze brought to the trial to testify? Unimportant; somebody confessed for him. (Laughter and applause).

Leave that aside and you still have three versions of the plot - one, plunge over a cliff, and they chose a specific cliff with a log of lumber in the road to help them plunge over - Route 1; 2, run into a ditch by driving

the car at full speed. That didn't work. In the first Moscow trial the reason why they didn't kill Voroshilov was the car drove too fast. That is understandable. You can't always overturn a car by driving too fast. This time Molotov's life was saved, thank God, because Arnold drove the Molotov car at too slow a speed. What happened? Because he was driving very slowly, too slowly, the car overturned. (Laughter) Look here, ask any chauffeur, any man that has ever driven a car, anyone; it is a physical impossibility for a car to turn over because it is going too slowly. It can't happen. Of course, in these trials everything is possible, that is right.

Now let us take the case of Stroiлов, another one. He is condemned for being an arch-saboteur and wrecker, the man who prevented the industry that he had charge of, the coal industry in Western Siberia, from producing. That is the second trial. They had this confession in the record. Unfortunately there was once a man named Joseph Gottenberg, who invented the art of printing, and once you print something it remains forever in the record. When you look in the record you find the following in the official organ of the State Coal Industry of April, 1936: we find an article praising him, praising the new methods of coal mining devised and applied by citizen Stroiлов in the Kuzbas Coal basin and advocating the extension of these methods to the rest of the

country's coal mining industry. In Pravda of October 8, 1935, you have a photograph, which is produced here (showing to the audience) of Stroiлов. Why? He is being decorated with the Order of the Red Labor Banner in 1935 for raising the coal output in the mines under his direction. He was chief engineer of the Kuzbas Coal Trust. You cannot work your head off night and day, as Stroiлов confessed he did, to sabotage and wreck and ruin and at the same time, thanks to some supernatural power, raise coal production in the very basin that you are sabotaging. It just does not gibe.

Take a fine comb. Piatakov, the chief engineer of all the wrecking; nevertheless, on April 8, 1935, Investzia, the official government organ in Moscow, reports that Piatakov has been decorated together with a hundred others for overfulfilment, the overfulfilment of the industrial program for 1934, the very year in which he was supposed to have brought the sabotage about.

I take it that Comrade Trotsky when he speaks will deal more at length with it and more expertly, but I have brought before you a few points in order to show why millions, literally millions, throughout the world doubt the validity of the Moscow trials, and that is what we are here to speak of, and how and why they can believe them merely on faith or on the order of the Daily Worker. By what rule? Regardless of a hundred confessions, is it

reasonable to ask us to believe the monstrous accusations made against the accused men? In the first place, as to the confessions themselves, we know their value from the past, in the engineers' trial in 1930 and 1931, of how brazenly they confessed that they had been receiving thousands upon thousands of French francs from the former Russian millionaire, Riadinsky(?) in Paris to finance their White Guard activities every one of them confessed in detail to what money they received from him. There was one little trouble in that confession. Riadinsky had been dead for several years. That was proved.

Now, why should a guilty but penitent man confess to every possible thing unless his confessions have been dictated to him? In the Menshevik trial of 1931 the leader of the Menshevik Party, Abramovitch, was supposed to be conspiring in Russia, according to the confessions of all the defendants who gave details as to the date and the place. There was only one difficulty with that. A few issues back in the Pravda, several months before, and in the Communist paper in Berlin, the "Rote Fahne", and all other European papers, there were published reports of Abramovitch making speeches and participating in the sessions of the Bureau of Coyoacan in Brussels on the same day that he was supposed to be conspiring secretly in Russia.

At that time, too, let us not forget that all the

defendants confessed that Leon Blum, leader of the French Socialist Party, was organizing with his own ten fingers military intervention against the Soviet Union. (Laughter) They gave details. I defy the Communist press today to repeat that charge about Leon Blum. (Applause)

Now, the very monstrosity of the confessions, the very monstrosity of the accusations, defeat their own purpose. Whichever way you look at it, all these confessions and accusations are a condemnation not of the accused but of the accusers. They are thieves, murderers, saboteurs, wreckers, assassins, Fascists, allies of Hitler and the Japanese military staff, common spies, the scum of the earth, mad dogs; that is what they are accused of - and who? Who? A nobody - ex-Mensheviks who were opposed to the Revolution in all its early period, like the prosecutor during the trial. In these men were Lenin's general staff in the most crucial period of the Russian Revolution (applause). You cannot blot that out. Of all that almighty, indomitable and unforgettable group Stalin alone is now left, and if you insist that the confessions are true, we must ask, what kind of regime is this that Stalin has established if it has driven men who worked side by side with Lenin to the depths of infamy, a blood purging reaction? Why should they prefer Fascism to Communism? How can we believe it? How can you condemn a single worker or liberal

who knows anything about the Labor Movement or the history of the Russian Revolution for doubting, to put it mildly, that men of such calibre and stature and of such records, active for years, are like common criminals of the most dastardly type?

You are defaming yourselves when you say that. You are defaming the whole working class movement and its most noble ideals. That is why especially, in my last words, I express myself especially to those who support the Communist Party and are vitally interested in this campaign - why, why, why? I already have convictions on the trial, but there are thousands and millions who are not of my conviction. They cannot be accused of Trotskyist theories, of counter-revolutionary activities, of Fascism; they are the potential followers of the American revolutionary movement. If they are not won for the cause of Socialism, then the cause of Socialism is lost, and if they are not won for the Soviet Union, then the Soviet Union is lost.

I consider myself an unconditional supporter of the Soviet Labor Movement (applause) and I have been one since its victory in 1917 and for the last 17 years in the organized revolutionary movement. I understand that you don't believe me or that you have been told not to believe me. Very well, I am not concerned with the movement, then, but you consider yourselves revolutionists, friends of the

Soviet Union, so look at it from this standpoint: To be successful in your aim you must have the support of the millions that do not believe in the trial and the accusations and the confessions. Many consider it a frame-up. Others are doubtful. Others are bewildered or upset. That is not an invention of mine. You know it is a fact. Merely by repeating that the men are the scum of the earth you haven't convinced these people that you want in the future. Look about you. Every day you will see them.

Remember who takes comfort from the trial - the enemies of the labor movement. The Boston Globe says (reading): "No communist brought to the court now will ever be believed." Isn't it logical for the bourgeoisie to say that, for the workers/<sup>to</sup>believe it, and for the Chicago Tribune to say that after the Moscow trial it wouldn't be hard to believe that the communists did fire the Reichstag.

You don't believe it, I don't believe it, but that is the capital that is made of it. You are staining the garments of Socialism with blood which millions believe were innocently shed.

I don't believe there is Fascism in Russia, that it is a Fascist State, but how many papers have stated and how many workers have believed that the executions of Moscow are no different from the Hitler purge of 1934, and by your insistence that the verdict be swallowed whole by



everybody without further reflection or bedamned as a Fascist, you give fuel to the fires of these accusations.

Now, I say to you, you convicted the German Stuckling and sentenced him to die. Hitler said, "No" and his Ambassador in Moscow said "No." He demanded that you commute that to a jail sentence, and you granted it. The whole labor movement of the world outside of the Communist Party asked merely for a stay of execution of Zinoviev and of the other 15, in order for an investigation to be made. You ignored their demand completely. Do you know what you did by that? The Second International Federal Trade Unions, representing - they are a power - said, "Why did you yield to Hitler over an unknown miserable Gestapo agent, granted him his life, and shoot down like dogs men like Zinoviev and Kamenev?"

(Loud and prolonged applause during which some of the speaker's remarks were unable to be heard.)

What is more, contemptuously spitting in the face of the bulk of the organized labor movement, millions become increasingly disturbed by that. Don't you realize that from your own point of view, however narrow it might be? Why don't you let Trotsky speak and present his side. If from the truth you have nothing to fear, confront Trotsky with these accusations, support your charges, see if you can make your charges stick. In the name of all that is

sacred in the labor movement, you have neither right nor wisdom in your position not to accord an impartial commission the opportunity of investigation, a commission of such intellectual probity that will have a standing for everybody, their decision.

Give Trotsky his chance. Find out if even his name or even his life is at stake. It is the name of Socialism that is involved. In the long run it is the life of the working class movement and the Soviet Union that is at stake. We have no fears of the outcome of such an investigation. We will abide by the decision of such a commission of inquiry.

Your support for it, you here and all those with whom you come in contact tomorrow and the day after and the day after - your support will help vindicate the honor of the working class movement, which has been overhung by a blighting cloud. Your support, whether you believe the accused innocent or guilty, will make you a recruit in a struggle to redeem the honor and the glory of the Russian Revolution, to undo the horrible unspeakable wrong, to achieve a victory to the self-esteem of the working class movement. I want you to support the Committee. I am not alone in this. Scores of the best elements in the country, scores of those who are liberals in the best sense of the word - and there are some who cannot be intimidated by

blackmail - support the Committee. You believe he is guilty? Very well, prove it to the entire world. Prove it before an absolutely impartial and authentic commission of inquiry, upon which there may be members of the Communist Party, on one condition, that they are not the majority of them. That is a reasonable condition to put. That is the only one that we put. (Applause.)

Will you support it? Will you contribute to our work? Will you make possible the spread of propaganda for that one single purpose? The Trotskyists who continue the Trotskyist propaganda, they have a right, and we will fight for that right for a number of reasons, but the Committee is not concerned with that; the Committee wants to carry on the work to establish one thing, after which it can go out of existence - a Commission of Inquiry. We want your support for it. There is a tremendous unprecedented apparatus aligned against us. We have to build up something to rebut it, and so, without further ado, not as if this were an ordinary meeting, but because the need is so urgent and imperative, I just want you to contribute tonight, instead of a hailstorm of abuse a hailstorm of money, to enable us to continue our work.

I want to know who in the audience will make the first large unnamed contribution? Who will? We want

everything to go off in perfect order. Comrade Trotsky is to speak to you in only a few minutes. We want the collection to be over by then. Quickly; who will make the first substantial contribution? I won't mention the sum. (No response.)

All right, who will give the first twenty-dollar bill? Hold up your hand. The first twenty-dollar bill? It is one of the lowest sums I have ever started a collection with. I want to get as much money as I can. Who will give a twenty-dollar bill?

I want to make this announcement to you: two members of the Debs Brigade leaving for Spain contribute one dollar in support of the demand for the impartial committee for inquiry, because they believe that the fight against Fascism must be based upon truth.

Sam Linsky, the first twenty dollars. How many more? Hold up your hands and bring it up as promptly as you can. Hold up your hands. Who will give ten? There should be a forest of them. A check for \$25 has just been announced. Who will give ten dollars? Please hold up your hands. It is imperative to finance the work of this Committee. We want a large representative collection. We want it quickly. Who will give another ten?

Let me read to you extracts from other communications we have received. In reply to the New Masses demand

Norman Thomas declares: "I have read with interest the proof of Mr, Maurice Hallgran's letter on which you asked me to comment. Nothing that Mr. Hallgran says makes me alter my position, which is one of desire to defend the right of political asylum and to get as near as I can to the truth of the charge against Trotsky, which threatens disruption of the working class movement and the weakening of the position of the advance of Socialism."

Ten dollars, please, is what we want now. Contribute generously. Sticks from a woman, anonymous. Any more? Hold up your hands for the ten dollars, please, and bring them down as rapidly as you collect them.

Who has a five-dollar bill? Five-dollar bills? Singles?

(The collection of money proceeded.)

Give generously to this, comrades, all friends. We are not financed by anyone on the outside; we must have your support. The fives and tens we are going for. Hold up your hands. For the singles; we will be prepared to take them right now.

Let me read to you this telegram, Akron, Ohio:  
 "Although work in auto and rubber strikes has prevented rubber workers progressive from giving active support to your committee, accept our best wishes for continued success in behalf of Leon Trotsky. Success. Greetings to the meeting. Let the truth be known. B. J. Witich (?), Research

Here is a cable from France, from the Paris Committee for the Defense of Trotsky, which salutes the action of the American Committee to shed truth on the trials and struggles of Leon Trotsky, and says they are fraternally with us. Leon Blum.

MR. NOVACK: I wish to announce that Trotsky's speech, which you will shortly hear, will be published immediately by Pioneer Publishers and will be on sale at the Labor Book Shops and on stands throughout the country.

MR. SHACHTMAN: Let me read to you still another telegram. This is signed by the Dean of American Sociology: "If the truth underlying the Stalin-Trotsky feud can be had, let us have it. Edward A. Ross, Madison, Wisconsin."

I read here a message sent us by the Spanish Anti-Fascists Militia, which has a delegation in Mexico: "To the Committee for the Defense of Leon Trotsky: The Committee of Spanish Anti-Fascist Militia of the P. O. M., (?) which on February 20th will arrive in New York, salutes the great assemblage united to hear the voice of Leon Trotsky, hoping from this great meeting will result great benefits for the International Proletarian Revolution and for the workers of the whole world. With proletarian greetings, down with fascism and capitalism, long live the Socialist Revolution, long live the armed Spanish Proletariat," and it is signed on behalf of the delegation.

I will read another message received from the Anarchist Group Vanguard of New York: "As always the Anarchist movement has regarded the rights of free speech, press, and assembly for the working class and minority groups thereof as being absolutely necessary for the success of the revolutionary movement. While we disagree fundamentally with the views represented by Leon Trotsky, nevertheless, in accordance with the principles of revolutionary democracy, we favor a fair and impartial trial as proposed by your committee. Yours for freedom, Secretary, Anarchist Vanguard Movement."

MR. NOVACK: Once again I must ask you please to refrain from smoking. It is not only our request, but that of the Fire Department.

MR. SHACHTMAN: While the collection is going on let me refresh your memory as to those who join with us in all parts of the globe in favor of an international investigation committee. In the United States the General Workers Union of Minneapolis, the Furniture Workers Union and the Northern State Power Union, the Socialist Party of the United States, (Applause) the Independent Labor Party of Great Britain (applause), the National Federation of Labor of Spain (applause), the Workers Party of the same country. In Australia the Queensland Federation of Farm Workers (applause), in France the Seine District of the

Socialist Movement of France. In Poland the Jewish Bund and the Central Trades Union Committee, in Germany (?) the Socialist Workers Party of the country.

On the English Committee for the Impartial Investigation of such men and women as Henry Knowles Krollsberg (?), J. V. Morgan, the Socialist League, Romane Guild, Chairman of the Trades Council, Comrade (?) Steward Briggs of the Railroad Employees Union, Hilliard Rathbone.

In France the committee includes such men as Julian Leon, Andre Breton, Victor Marquard. Other committees exist in Czechoslovakia, Canada, Australia, in Denmark, and, virtually every other important land commissions of the same kind are in the process of forming. We want to make our section of it, the American, as completely alive and as much on the job as possible. For that you have to contribute. Ours is the principal responsibility. We all like the work. When our work gets under way properly the commission of inquiry will hold its sessions in the City of New York, open sessions. You have got to help us in that. Those of you who have not yet contributed please do so before the meeting is adjourned. If you do not have the cash with you make out a slip of paper pledging a certain amount of money. You can redeem it in a few days. Get the slips from the collectors. If



you don't want to do that, send your contribution to the office of the Committee, American Committee for the Defense of Leon Trotsky, 22 East 17th Street, Room 511, this City. Thank you very much. (Applause.)

MR. NOVACK: The Committee asks that during the broadcast from Mexico the audience refrain from any demonstration whatsoever, adverse or favorable, so that every person in the hall can hear every word of the speech from Trotsky, especially the English part.

The newsreel pictures will be taken in about five or six minutes, just prior to Trotsky's broadcast.

(A list of books available for sale was read off to the audience.)

MR. SHACHTMAN: I have been given the Honor of introducing to you the next speaker. As has been said on another occasion, it would be almost an insult to try to attempt to characterize the speaker who is to address you in about four and a half minutes. I will not make much of an attempt to do it, but I do want to utilize the intervening minutes to make a special appeal to the audience.

I take it for granted that in this splendid assembly there are not only friends of Trotsky and impartial persons who take no position on the conflict between him and the Soviet leaders, but also members or supporters or friends of the Communist Party, whose antagonism to

Trotsky is comparatively well known. I know the slogans of the Communist Party and its activities in this case. They uphold the extermination of Trotsky. They uphold the running of Trotskyists out of Russia. I make a fair proposal: You go ahead and run all of them out, if you can, but do it on such a basis, if you can - if you can - that will enable you to get the support of those workers who are now aligned up on neither side.

I want to make this proposal to you, particularly for tonight: I will not conceal a certain apprehension that we all have. Trotsky is speaking from Mexico City over the telephone. He has no way of knowing if and when he is being interrupted. I ask the friends and those who really came to listen to make absolutely no demonstrations whatsoever. You merely defeat your own aims. You will not hear Trotsky while you are demonstrating. Don't applaud at all. Please don't. There is no way of his knowing when to stop for that applause. He is not interested in it, in the first place; he is interested in speaking to you and presenting his side really for the first time orally.

Now I will appeal to those who are not friendly with Trotsky, whom we are very happy to have here tonight. I don't want to say anything about them. I merely want to state what I know. I know that members of the Committee have been informed on what we consider quite reliable authority that efforts were going to be made here tonight not

to break up the meeting -- it is impossible to do that -- but to create such a disturbance during Trotsky's speech that the audience won't hear it. We know that little groups have been sent down not by the American Committee for the Defense of Leon Trotsky but by somebody else (laughter) to develop sudden and extended spasms of coughing during Trotsky's speech. If you feel galloping consumption really coming on, please leave; otherwise we will know why you are coughing, and if you will permit me to say so, we will be compelled to act accordingly. We know that others have come here to move chairs about, if chairs are movable, and we have been informed further that professional disturbers have been sent down. I unfortunately am not joking.

I again appeal to you: From your own point of view don't create such a scandal as will leave your name as black as it was when you attempted and succeeded in breaking up the Madison Square Garden meeting three years ago. Don't try it. The audience won't stand for it. The audience is here to listen. I think that is enough on that score.

Now, with great feeling of pride and really stirred by deep emotion, I am happy that we have been able to arrange for this telephone address by a man forty or more of whose fifty-seven years have been devoted undeviatingly to the cause of the proletarian struggle, whose effort and labor in

the revolutionary movement is ineffaceable for all times, whatever your opinions may legitimately be of his point of view, a man whose name on the revolutionary and internationally revolutionary movement, side by side with his co-architect of the Russian Revolution, is deathless. I am happy to present to you our comrade, Leon Trotsky. (Loud applause.)

MR. SHACHTMAN: (At 10:15 p. m.) The call to Mexico City has been delayed just for one minute. As soon as connections are made with Mexico the address will begin. Please do all your coughing now. (Laughter.) The Russian part of the speech will be delivered first.

(A short time later.) We have just had word that the signal has already been flashed to Mexico City, and if you will be good enough to be patient a little while longer, in two or three minutes at the outside his address will begin.

(At 10:27 p. m.) The latest report is that attempts are now being made to get as clear a wire as possible. There is no need for being uneasy at all. All we do is repeat our request that you remain as patient as you can for the next few minutes. We want to get the wire as clear and as filtered as possible, so that the voice comes over clearly.

(Later) This is a provisional announcement, the

complete accuracy of which we cannot yet vouch for. Our friends are still on the wire and are trying to get the connection through clear, but the Associated Press just report from Mexico City that Coyoacan, the suburb of Mexico City where Trotsky is living, has a defective wire and that the police are rushing Trotsky into the city itself, in order to broadcast. That will mean a delay of a little while.

Another report - I repeat that I cannot yet vouch for the accuracy of any one of them - received from the American Telephone & Telegraph Company, says that the wire has been cut south of Monterey (hisses). Monterey is approximately 600 miles north of Mexico City. It is the principal town below the border of the United States; but please hold on, don't become panicky. We are still sticking on the wire trying to get the connection through. We will have more definite news in just a minute.

(Later)

Another report, again from the officials of the A. T. & T., who have just reported that they have a clear wire from here down, but that the wire from Mexico City up, for some technical reason or other, that they can't get clear as yet, and I once more appeal to you, don't be impatient. In the worst of cases - and we are prepared even for that - if it proves impossible to get a clear wire through you will nevertheless hear Comrade Trotsky's speech in full. We have received today, early this afternoon, in order to have it in advance for the press representatives, so that they could print it in their early editions for tomorrow morning, a complete English copy of the speech; and I repeat that in the worst of cases, if we don't get through in the next several minutes, the speech will be read to you in its entirety. I ardently hope that we won't have to resort to that, that you will be able to hear Comrade Trotsky's voice over the telephone.

Be patient. We are doing all in our power, and the officials in the A. T. & T. are cooperating to the greatest extent possible to get a clear wire through. Please hold on to your seats.

A VOICE: We will stay here all night.

MR. SHACHTMAN: It seems that the report from the Associated Press, that I mentioned before, is likely

the truth. The A. T. & T. officials have attempted to get through now to Coyoacan, his home, but are unable to locate him there, which indicates that he has been rushed into Mexico City in an attempt to find a clear and not defective wire there. However, the committee has requested of me, that in view of the fact that we have the speech right here now, that I read it or begin to read it, and that as soon as Comrade Trotsky comes through --

VOICES: No, no, not yet.

MR. SHACHTMAN: (Continuing) We are getting impatient, but the idea is that as soon as Trotsky comes through, which we hope will be as rapidly as possible, I will stop. If you want, we will have it democratically decided. If you want me to begin right now with the text, I shall do it. If you want to wait another few minutes, five or ten minutes --

VOICES: Yes, wait.

MR. SHACHTMAN: All those who want to wait for Comrade Trotsky to begin, will you please show your hands?

(Showing of hands.)

All those who would like to hear me start now by reading, and don't make up in voice what you lack in hands. (Showing of hands.)

The waiters have it, so we will wait a few more

minutes.

(At 10.55 p. m.)

MR. SHACHTMAN: Will you please take your seats. The Committee at the telephone, which is attempting to get a clear wire, just reports that their efforts thus far have not resulted in a clear wire. Telephone calls have been put through to the home of Diego Riviera, thus far with no results, but the Erickson Telephone System, which is one of the systems in Mexico, has<sup>been</sup> communicating with the home of John Modiga, the Minister of Communications of Public Works in Mexico, who has in his department telephonic communication. An attempt has even been made to get through to President John Cardenas. The Committee suggests with all due respect to the vote that was taken here a few minutes ago, a vote which is entirely understandable, it goes without saying, that we nevertheless begin with the reading of the speech and that the moment Trotsky comes through on the wire I will be automatically out off. (Applause.) The most that you will have lost under those conditions will have been to bear with me while I read what someone else should be delivering, so if you have no objection, I will begin the reading of the speech. You may be assured that every human effort is being made by the men at the telephone in back of the hall here to get through to Mexico City. The technicians of the Hippodrome itself are hard



at work. The officials of the A. T. & T. are cooperating. If there is any possibility whatsoever of getting it rapidly it will be here. Meanwhile I hope that you will listen while I read the exact text of the speech as translated into English. You will have to defer listening for the five or ten minutes in Russian, which Comrade Trotsky planned to deliver prior to his English address.

(Mr. Max Shachtman read the speech of Leon Trotsky as follows):

(At several points during the reading there were interruptions while the following took place.)

MR. GEORGE NOVAK: We are informed that Trotsky is at a telephone in Mexico City and preparing to deliver if not his intended address at least some words to you who have waited so patiently to hear his voice. There is at present a little difficulty with the amplifiers in Mexico City. He will probably come through in from three to ten minutes. Shachtman will continue reading his speech, and then as soon as he is ready we will cut Trotsky in.

(Later.)

MR. SHACHTMAN:

I hesitate to ask the audience for more patience.

It has been absolutely a marvel of good working class patience. I hope it will remain patient, even if the hour is late. You will see we are making every possible effort to make a connection. Those words that you heard over the loudspeaker, "Hello Felix," were the first words to come through from Mexico City and were spoken by Comrade Trotsky's secretary, so we have a connection now finally. All we have to do now is to clear it through.  
(Applause.)

(Later.)

We now have it definite that at 9 o'clock a cut was discovered in the wire, but that efforts have been

made since 9 o'clock in an attempt to get the wire cleared through. It is definite also that Comrade Trotsky was actually rushed from his home in Coyoacan to the central station in Mexico City itself. We have got word through that he is right in front of the microphone at this very moment, but apparently with the improvised apparatus there is some difficulty in clearing his voice through to here.

So far as the control room in the Hippodrome is concerned, that is working perfectly. As soon as it is cleared up a little in Mexico City we will have it here. In the meanwhile, in the hope I may be cut off very quickly, I will continue with the reading of the address of Comrade Trotsky.

(Mr. Shachtman completed the reading of the address, after which there was loud and sustained applause.)

MR. NOVAK: We now have a person who has been on the wire this evening for hours and will now give you an accurate report of what has occurred, as well as a personal message from Trotsky himself. Please be patient for five or ten more minutes. We realize it is late, but I think it will be well worth it.

MR. HAROLD HERMAN: It is not yet possible to give a completely accurate explanation, because we don't know, and there have been several explanations given, reports

that came over the telephone and also reports that came over the press wires, including one that the wires had been cut. In any case, it appears that a technical difficulty developed on the wire south of Monterey. That is the information given to us by the American Telegraph & Telephone Company, further details of which we are awaiting from them.

We spent an hour trying to contact directly to the home of Diego Riviera at Mexico City and found finally that Trotsky had been rushed from there to the office of the telephone company in Mexico City, in an attempt to rig up a new apparatus there which would enable him to speak to this meeting. It was found that the amplifying apparatus attached to the special program circuit which had been arranged for this meeting could not be used there. An attempt was made to bring the speech over an ordinary telephone line, but this was found impractical.

We were finally able to reach him over that telephone, and he has dictated over the wire the following brief message:

"I am deeply regretful that I have been unable to communicate directly with your meeting. The technical arrangements here were extremely poor. I am extremely unhappy to have involuntarily been unable to go through with the arrangements made. Between your meeting and

me lie defects of a technical nature. I send to your magnificent meeting heartiest fraternal greetings. Leon Trotsky." (Applause.)

(At this point the meeting began to disband.)

MR. NOVAK: We have here a resolution as follows: --

(Due to the noise of the disbanding of the meeting it was not possible to hear accurately the resolution offered.)

Dear Listeners, Comrades and Friends:

My first word is one of apology for my impossible English. My record word is one of thanks to the Committee which has made it possible for me to address your meeting. The theme of my address is the Moscow trial. I do not intend for an instant to overstep the limits of this theme, which even in itself is much too vast. I will appeal not to the passions, not to your nerves, but to reason. I do not doubt that reason will be found on the side of truth.

The Zinoviev-Kamenev trial has provoked in public opinion terror, agitation, indignation, distrust or at least perplexity. The trial of Piatakov-Radek has once more enforced these sentiments. Such is the incontestable fact. A doubt of justice signifies, in this case, a suspicion of frame-up. Can one find a more humiliating suspicion against a government which appears under the banner of socialism? Where do the interests of the soviet government itself lie? In dispelling these suspicions. What is the duty of the true friends of the Soviet Union? To say firmly to the soviet government: it is necessary at all costs to dispel the distrust of the Western World for soviet justice.

To answer to this demand: "We have our justice, the rest does not concern us much," is to occupy one's

self, not with the socialist enlightenment of the masses, but with the policies of inflated prestige, in the style of Hitler or Mussolini.

Even the "Friends of the USSR," who are convinced in their own hearts of the justice of the Moscow trial (and how many are there? What a pity that one cannot take a census of consciences!), even these unshakeable friends of the bureaucracy are duty-bound to demand with us the creation of an authorized commission of inquiry. The Moscow authorities must present to such a commission all the necessary testimonies. There can evidently be no lack of them, since it was on the basis of those given that 49 persons were shot in the "Kirov" trials, without counting the 150 who were shot without trial.

Let us recall that by way of guarantees for the justice of the Moscow verdicts before world public opinion, two lawyers present themselves: Pritt from London and Rosenmark from Paris, not to mention the American journalist Duranty. But who gives guarantee for these guarantees? The two lawyers Pritt and Rosenmark acknowledge gratefully that the soviet government placed at their disposal all the necessary explanations. Let us add that the "King's counsellor" Pritt was invited to Moscow at a fortunate time, since the date of the trial was carefully concealed from the entire world until the last moment.

The Soviet government did not thus count on humiliating the dignity of its justice by having recourse behind the scenes to the assistance of foreign lawyers and journalists. But when the Socialist and Trade-Union Internationals demanded the opportunity to send their lawyers to Moscow, they were treated - no more and no less - as defenders of assassins and of the Gestapo! You know, truly, that I am not a partisan of the Second International or of the Trade-Union International. But is it not clear that their moral authority is incomparably above the authority of lawyers with supple spines? Have we not the right to say: the Moscow government forgets its "prestige" before authorities and experts, whose approbation is assured to them in advance; it is cheerfully willing to make the "King's counsellor" Pritt a counsellor of the GPU. But, on the other hand, it has up to now brutally rejected every examination which would carry with it guarantees of objectivity and impartiality. Such is the incontestable and deadly fact! Perhaps, however, this conclusion is inaccurate? There is nothing easier than to refute it. Let the Moscow government present to an international commission of inquiry serious, precise, and concrete explanations regarding all the obscure spots of the Kirov trials. And apart from these obscure spots there is - alas! - nothing! That is precisely why Moscow resorts to all



kinds of measures to force me, the principal accused, to keep my silence. Under Moscow's terrible economic pressure the Norwegian government placed me under lock-and-key. What good fortune that the magnanimous hospitality of Mexico permitted myself and my wife to meet the new trial, not under imprisonment, but in freedom! But all the wheels to force me once more into silence have again been set into motion. Why does Moscow so fear the voice of a single man? Only because I know the truth, the whole truth. Only because I have nothing to hide. Only because I am ready to appear before a public and impartial commission of inquiry with documents, facts and testimonies in my hands, and to disclose the truth to the very end. I declare: If this commission decides that I am guilty in the slightest degree of the crimes which Stalin imputes to me, I pledge in advance to place myself voluntarily in the hands of the executioners of the GPU. That, I hope, is clear. Have you all heard? I make this declaration before the entire world. I ask the press to publish my words in the farthest corners of our planet. But if the commission establishes - do you hear me? - that the Moscow trials are a conscious and premeditated frame-up, constructed with the bones and nerves of human beings, I will not ask my accusers to place themselves voluntarily before a firing-squad. No, the eternal disgrace in the memory of human generations will

be sufficient for them! Do the accusers of the Kremlin hear me? I throw my defiance in their faces. And I await their reply!

Through this declaration I reply in passing to the frequent objections of superficial sceptics: "Why must we believe Trotsky and not Stalin?" It is absurd to busy one's self with psychological divinations. It is not a question of personal confidence. It is a question of verification! I propose a verification! I demand the verification!

Listeners and friends: Today you expect from me neither a refutation of the "proofs," which do not exist in this affair, nor a detailed analysis of the "confessions," those unnatural, artificial, inhuman monologues which carry in themselves their own refutation. I would need more time than the prosecutor of a concrete analysis of the trials, because it is more difficult to disentangle than to entangle. This work I will accomplish in the press and before the future commission. My task today is to unmask the fundamental, original viciousness of the Moscow trials, to show the motive forces of the frame-up, its true political aims, the psychology of its participants and of its victims.

The trial of Zinoviev-Kamenev was concentrated upon "terrorism." The trial of Piatakov-Radek placed in the

center of the stage, no longer terror, but the alliance of the Trotskyites with Germany and Japan for the preparation of war, the dismemberment of the USSR, the sabotage of industry and the extermination of works. How to explain this crying discrepancy? For, after the execution of the 16 we were told that the depositions of Zinoviev, Kamenev and the others were voluntary, sincere, and corresponding to the facts. Moreover, Zinoviev and Kamenev demanded the death penalty for themselves! Why then did they not say a word about the most important thing: The alliance of the Trotskyites with Germany and Japan and the plot to dismember the USSR? Could they have forgotten such "details" of the plot? Could they themselves, the leaders of the so-called center, not have known what was known by the accused in the last trial, people of a secondary category? The enigma is easily explained: the new amalgam was constructed after the execution of the 16, during the course of the last five months, as an answer to unfavorable echoes in the world press.

The most feeble part of the trial of the 16 is the accusation against old Bolsheviks of an alliance with the secret police of Hitler, the Gestapo. Neither Zinoviev, nor Kamenev, nor Smirnov, nor in general any one of the accused with political names, confessed to this

liaison; they stopped short before this extreme of self-abasement! It follows that I, through obscure, unknown intermediaries such as Olberg, Berman, Fritz David and others, had entered into an alliance with the Gestapo for such grand purposes as the obtaining of a Honduran passport for Olberg. The whole thing was too foolish. No one wanted to believe it. The whole trial was discredited. It was necessary to correct the gross error of the stage-managers at all costs. It was necessary to fill up the hole. Jagoda was replaced by Ejov. A new trial was placed on the order of the day. Stalin decided to answer his critics in this way: "You don't believe that Trotsky is capable of entering into alliance with the Gestapo for the sake of an Olberg and a passport from Honduras? Very well, I will show you that the purpose of his alliance with Hitler was to provoke war and partition out the world." However, for this second, more grandiose production, Stalin lacked the principal actors: He had shot them. In the principal roles of the principal presentation he could place only secondary actors! It is not superfluous to note that Stalin attached much value to Piatakov and Radek as collaborators. But he had no other people with well-known names, who, if only because of their distant pasts, could pass as "Trotskyites." That is why fate descended sternly upon Radek and

Piatakov. The version about my meetings with the rotten trash of the Gestapo through unknown, occasional intermediaries was dropped. The matter was suddenly raised to the heights of the world stage! It was no longer a question of a Honduran passport, but of the parcelling of the USSR and even the defeat of the United States of America. 'With the aid of a gigantic elevator the plot ascends during a period of five months from the dirty police dregs to the heights on which are decided the destinies of nations. Zinoviev, Kamenev, Smirov, Mratchkovsky, went to their graves without knowing of these grandiose schemes, alliances, and perspectives. Such is the fundamental falsehood of the last amalgam!

In order to hide, even if only slightly, the glaring contradiction between the two trials, Piatakov and Radek testified, under the dictation of the GPU, that they had formed a "parallel" center, in view of Trotsky's lack of confidence in Zinoviev and Kamenev. It is difficult to imagine a more stupid and deceitful explanation! I really did not have confidence in Zinoviev and Kamenev after their capitulation, and I have had no connection with them since 1927. But I had still less confidence in Radek and Piatakov! Already in 1929 Radek delivered into the hands of the GPU the oppositionist Blumkin, who was shot silently and without trial. Here is what I wrote then in the "Bulletin

of the Russian Opposition" which appears abroad: "After having lost the last remnants of moral equilibrium, Radek does not stop at any objection." It is outrageous to be forced to cite such harsh statements about the unfortunate victims of Stalin. But it would be criminal to hide the truth out of sentimental considerations....Radek and Piatakov themselves regarded Zinoviev and Kamenev with haughty superiority, and in this self-appreciation they were not mistaken. But more than that. At the time of the trial of the 16, the prosecutor named Smirnov as the "leader of the Trotskyites in the USSR." The accused Mratchkovsky, as a proof of his proximity to me, declared that I was accessible only through his intermediation, and the prosecutor in his turn emphasized this fact. How then was it possible that not only Zinoviev and Kamenev, but Smirnov, the "leader of the Trotskyites in the USSR," and Mratchkovsky as well, knew nothing of the plans about which I had instructed Radek, openly branded by me as a traitor? Such is the primary falsehood of the last trial. It appears by itself in broad daylight. We know its source. We see the strings off-stage. We see the brutal hand which pulls them.

Radek and Piatakov confessed to frightful crimes. But their crimes, from the point of view of the accused and not of the accusers, do not make sense. With the aid of terror, sabotage and alliance with the imperialists, they

would have liked to re-establish capitalism in the Soviet Union. Why? Throughout their entire lives they struggled against capitalism. Perhaps they were guided by personal motives: the lust for power? the thirst for gain? Under any other regime Piatakov and Radek could not hope to occupy higher positions than those which they occupied before their arrest. Perhaps they were so stupidly sacrificing themselves out of friendship for me? An absurd hypothesis! By their actions, speeches, and articles during the last eight years, Radek and Piatakov demonstrated that they were my bitter enemies.

Terror? But is it possible that the oppositionists, after all the revolutionary experience in Russia, could not have foreseen that this would only serve as a pretext for the extermination of the best fighters? No, they knew that, they foresaw it, they stated it hundreds of times. No, terror was not necessary for us. On the other hand it was absolutely necessary for the ruling clique. On the 4th of March, 1929, eight years ago, I wrote: "Only one thing is left for Stalin: To attempt to draw a line of blood between the official party and the opposition. He absolutely must connect the opposition with attempts at assassination, the preparation of armed insurrection, etc." Remember: Bonapartism has never existed in history without police fabrication of plots!

The opposition would have to be composed of cretins to think that an alliance with Hitler or the Mikado, both of whom are doomed to defeat in the next war, that such an absurd, inconceivable, senseless alliance could yield to revolutionary Marxists anything but disgrace and ruin. On the other hand, such an alliance -- of the Trotskyites with Hitler -- was most necessary for Stalin. Voltaire says: "If God did not exist, it would be necessary to invent him." The GPU says: "If the alliance does not exist, it is necessary to fabricate it."

At the heart of the Moscow trials is an absurdity. According to the official version, the Trotskyites had been organizing the most monstrous plot since 1931. However, all of them, as if by command, spoke and wrote in one way but acted in another. In spite of the hundreds of persons implicated in the plot, over a period of five years, not a trace of it was revealed; no splits, no denunciations, no confiscated letters, until the hour of the general confessions arrived! Then a new miracle came to pass. People who had organized assassinations, prepared war, divided the Soviet Union, these tempered criminals suddenly confessed in August, 1936, not under the pressure of proofs -- no, because there were no proofs -- but for certain mysterious reasons, which hypocritical psychologists declare are peculiar attributes of the "Russian soul."



Just think: yesterday they carried out railroad wrecking and poisoning of workers -- by unseen order of Trotsky. Today they are Trotsky's accusers and heap upon his their pseudo-crimes. Yesterday they dreamed only of killing Stalin. Today they all sing hymns of praise to him. What is it: a mad-house, No, the Messieurs Duranty tell us, it is not a mad-house, but the "Russian soul." You lie, gentlemen, about the Russian soul. You lie about the human soul in general.

The miracle consists not only in the simultaneity and the universality of the confessions. The miracle, above all, is that, according to the general confessions, the conspirators did something which was fatal precisely to their own political interests, but extremely useful to the leading clique. Once more the conspirators before the tribunal said just what the most servile agents of Stalin would have said. Normal people, following the dictates of their own will, would never have been able to conduct themselves as Zinoviev, Kamenev, Radek, Piatakov and the others did. Devotion to their ideas, political dignity, the simple instinct of self-preservation would force them to struggle for themselves, for their personalities, for their interests, for their lives. The only reasonable and fitting question is this: Who led these people into a state in which all human reflexes are destroyed, and how

did he do it? There is a very simple principle in jurisprudence, which holds the key to many secrets: *is facti cult prodest*; he who benefits by it, he is the guilty one. The entire conduct of the accused has been dictated from beginning to end, not by their own ideas and interests, but by the interests of the ruling clique. And the pseudo-plot, and the confessions, the theatrical judgment and the entirely real executions, all were arranged by one and the same hand. Whose? *Cui prodest*, Who benefits? The hand of Stalin! The rest is deceit, falsehood, and idle babbling about the "Russian soul!" In the trials there did not figure fighters, nor conspirators, but puppets in the hands of the GPU. They play assigned roles. The aim of the disgraceful performance: to eliminate the whole opposition, to poison the very soul of critical thought, to definitely ensconce the totalitarian regime of Stalin.

We repeat: The accusation is a premediated frame-up. This frame-up must inevitably appear in each of the defendant's confessions; if they are examined alongside the facts. The prosecutor, Vyshinsky knows this very well. That is why he did not address a single concrete question to the accused, which would have embarrassed them considerably. The names, documents, dates, places, means of transportation, circumstances of the meetings -- around these

decisive facts Vyshinsky has placed a cloak of shame, or to be more exact, a shameless cloak. Vyshinsky dealt with the accused, not in the language of the jurist, but in the conventional language of the past-master of the frame-up, in the jargon of the thief. The insinuating character of Vyshinsky's questions -- along with the complete absence of material proofs -- this represents the second crushing evidence against Stalin.

But I do not intend to limit myself to these negative proofs. Oh, no! Vyshinsky has not demonstrated and cannot demonstrate that the subjective confessions were genuine, that is to say, in harmony with the objective facts. I undertake a much more difficult task; to demonstrate that each one of the confessions is false, that is, contradicts reality. Of what do my proofs consist? I will give you a couple of examples. I would need at least an hour to lay before you the two principal episodes: the pseudo-trip of the accused Holtzman to see me in Copenhagen, to receive terrorist instructions, and the pseudo-voyage of accused Piatakov to see me in Oslo, to get instructions about the dismemberment of the Soviet Union. I have at my disposal a complete arsenal of proofs that Holtzman did not come to see me in Copenhagen, and that Piatakov did not come to see me in Oslo. Now I mention only the simplest proofs, all that the

limitations of time permit.

Unlike the other defendants, Holtzman indicated the date; November 23-25, 1932 (the secret is simple: through the newspapers it was known when I arrived in Copenhagen) and the following concrete details: Holtzman came to visit me through my son, Leon Sedov, with whom he, Saltzman, had met in the Hotel Bristol. Concerning the Hotel Bristol, Holtzman had a previous engagement with Sedov in Berlin. When he came to Copenhagen, Holtzman actually met Sedov in the hall of this hotel. From there they both came to see me. At the time of Holtzman's rendezvous with me Sedov, according to Holtzman's words, frequently walked in and out of the room. What vivid details: We sigh in relief: at last we have, not just confused confessions, but also something which looks like a fact. The sad part of it, however, dear listeners, is that my son was not in Copenhagen, neither in November 1932 nor at any other time in his life. I beg you to keep this well in mind! In November 1932, my son was in Berlin, that is, in Germany and not in Denmark, and made vain efforts to leave in order to meet me and his mother in Copenhagen: don't forget that the Weimer democracy was already gasping out its last breath, and the Berlin police were becoming stricter and stricter. All the circumstances of my son's procedure regarding his departure are established by

precise evidence. Our daily telephonic communications with my son from Copenhagen to Berlin can be established by the telephone office in Copenhagen. Dozens of witnesses, who at that time surrounded my wife and myself in Copenhagen, know that we awaited our son impatiently, but in vain. At the same time, all of my son's friends in Berlin know that he attempted in vain to obtain a visa. Thanks precisely to those incessant efforts and obstacles, the fact that the meeting never materialized remains in the memories of dozens of people. They all live abroad and have already given their written depositions. Does that suffice? I should hope so! Pritt and Rosenmark, perhaps, say "No"? Because they are indulgent only with the GPU! Good: I will meet them halfway. I have still more immediate, still more direct, and still more indisputable proofs. Actually, our meeting with our son took place after we left Denmark, in France, en route to Turkey. That meeting was made possible only thanks to the personal intervention of the French premier, at that time, M. Herriot. In the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs my wife's telegram to Herriot, dated the first of December, has been preserved, as well as Herriot's telegraphic instruction to the French consulate in Berlin, on December 3rd, to give my son a visa immediately. For a time I feared that the agents of the GPU in Paris would seize these documents. Fortunately

they have not succeeded. The two telegrams were luckily found some weeks ago in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Do you understand me clearly? I now have copies of both telegrams at hand. I do not cite their texts, numbers and dates in order not to lose any time; I will give them to the press tomorrow. On my son's passport there is a visa granted by the French Consulate on December 3rd. On the morning of the fourth my son left Berlin. On his passport there are seals received at the frontier on the same day. The passport has been preserved in its entirety. Citizens of New York, do you hear my voice from Mexico City? I want you to hear every one of my words, despite my frightful English! Our meeting with our son took place in Paris, in the Gare de Nord, in a second-class train, which took us from Dunkerque, in the presence of dozens of friends who accompanied us and received us. I hope that is enough! Neither the GPU nor Pritt can ignore it. They are gripped in an iron vise. Holtzman could not see my son in Copenhagen because my son was in Berlin. My son could not have gone in and out during the course of the meeting. Who then will believe the fact of the meeting itself? Who will place any credence in the whole confession of Holtzman?

But that isn't all. According to Holtzman's words, his meeting with my son took place, as you have already heard, in the hall of the Hotel Bristol. Magnificent.... But it so

happens that the Hotel Bristol in Copenhagen was razed to its very foundation in 1917! In 1932 this hotel existed only as a fond memory. The hotel was rebuilt in 1936, precisely during the days when Holtzman was making his unfortunate declarations. The obliging Pritt presents us with the hypothesis of a probable "slip of the pen": the Russian stenographer you see, must have heard the word Bristol incorrectly, and moreover, none of the reporting journalists and editors corrected the error. Good! But how about my son? Also a stenographer's slip of the pen? There Pritt, following Vyshinsky, maintains an eloquent silence. In reality the GPU, through its agents in Berlin, knew of my sons efforts and assumed that he met me in Copenhagen. There is the source of the "slip of the pen"! Holtzman apparently knew the Hotel Bristol through memories of his emigration long ago, and that is why he named it. From that flows the second "slip of the pen"! Two slips combine to make a catastrophe: of Holtzman's confessions there remains only a cloud of coal-dust, as of the Hotel Bristol at the moment of its destruction.

And meanwhile - don't forget this! -- this is the most important confession in the trial of the sixteen; of all the old revolutionaries, only Holtzman had met with me and received terrorist instructions!

Let us pass to the second episode. Piatakov came to see my by airplane from Berlin to Oslo in the middle of December, 1935. Of the thirteen precise questions which I

addressed to the Moscow tribunal while Piatakov was yet alive, not a single one was answered. Each one of these questions destroys Piatakov's mythical voyage. Meanwhile my Norwegian host, Konrad Knudsen, a parliamentary deputy, and my former secretary, Erwin Wolff, have already stated in the press that I had no Russian visitor in December, 1935, and that I made no journeys without them. Don't those depositions satisfy you? Here is another one: the authorities of the Oslo aerodrome have officially established, on the basis of these records, that during the course of December, 1935, not a single foreign airplane landed at their airport! Perhaps a slip of the pen has also crept into the records of the aerodrome? Master Pritt, enough of your slips of the pen, kindly invent something more intelligent! But your imagination will avail you nothing more. I have at my disposal dozens of direct and indirect testimonies which expose the depositions of the unfortunate Piatakov, who was forced by the GPU to fly to see me in an imaginary airplane, just as the holy Inquisition forced witches to go to their rendezvous with the devil on a broomstick. The technique has changed, but the essence is the same.

In the Hippodrome there are undoubtedly competent jurists. I beg them to direct their attention to the fact that neither Hätzman nor Piatakov gave the slightest indication of my address, that is to say, of the time and the



meeting place. Neither one nor the other told of the precise passport or of the precise name under which he travelled abroad. The prosecutor did not even question them about their passports. The reason is clear: their names would not be found in the list of travellers abroad. Piatakov could not have avoided sleeping over in Norway, because the December days are very short. However, he did not name any hotel. The prosecutor did not even question him about the hotel. Why? Because the ghost of the Hotel Bristol hovers over Vychinsky's head! The prosecutor is not a prosecutor, but Piatakov's inquisitor and inspirer, just as Piatakov is only the unfortunate victim of the GPU.

I could now present an enormous amount of testimony and documents which would demolish at their very foundations the confessions of a whole series of defendants: Smirnov, Mratchkovsky, Dreitzer, Radek, Vladimir Romm, Olberg, in short, of all those who tried in the slightest degree to give facts, circumstances of time and place. Such a job, however, can be done successfully only before a commission of inquiry, with the participation of jurists having the necessary time for a detailed examination of documents and for hearing the depositions of witnesses.

But already what has been said by me permits, I hope, a forecast of the future development of the investigation. On the one hand, an accusation which is fantastic to

its very core: the entire old generation of Bolshevism is accused of an abominable treason, devoid of sense or purpose. To establish this accusation the prosecutor does not have at his command any material proofs, in spite of the thousands and thousands of arrests and searchings. The complete absence of evidence is the most terrible evidence against Stalin. The executions are based exclusively on forced confessions. And when facts are mentioned in these confessions they crumble to dust at the first contact with critical examination.

The GPU is not only guilty of frame-up. It is guilty of concocting a rotten, gross, foolish frame-up. The impunity is depraving. The absence of control paralyzes criticism. The falsifiers carry out their work no matter how. They rely on the sum-total effect of confessions and executions. If one carefully compares the fantastic nature of the accusation in its entirety with the manifest falsehood of the factual depositions, what is left of all these monotonous confessions? The suffocating odor of the inquisitorial tribunal, and nothing more!

But there is another kind of evidence which seems to me no less important. In the year of my deportation and the eight years of my emigration I wrote to close and distant friends about 2,000 letters, dedicated to the most vital questions of current politics. The letters received by me

and the copies of my replies exist. Thanks to their continuity, these letters reveal, above all, the profound contradictions, anachronisms and direct absurdities of the accusation, not only insofar as myself and my son are concerned, but also as regards the other accused. However, the importance of these letters extends beyond that fact. All of my theoretical and political activity during these years is reflected without a gap in these letters.

The letters supplement my books and articles. The examination of my correspondence, it seems to me, is of decisive importance for the characterization of the political and moral personality -- not only to myself, but also of my correspondents. Vyshinsky has not been able to present a single letter to the tribunal. I will present to the commission or to a tribunal thousands of letters, addressed, moreover, to the people who are closest to me and from whom I had nothing to hide, particularly to my son, Leon. This correspondence alone by its internal power of conviction nips the Stalinist amalgam in the bud. The prosecutor with his subterfuges and his insults and the accused with their confessional monologues are left suspended in thin air. Such is the significance of my correspondence. Such is the content of my archives. I do not ask anybody's confidence. I make an appeal to reasons, to logic, to criticism. I present facts and documents. I demand a verification!

Among you, dear listeners, there must not be a few people who freely say: "The confessions of the accused are false, that is clear; but how was Stalin able to obtain such confessions: therein lies the secret!" In reality the secret is not so profound. The Inquisition, with a much more simple technique, extorted all sorts of confessions from its victims. That is why the democratic penal law renounced the methods of the Middle Ages, because they led not to the establishment of the truth, but to a simple confirmation of the accusations dictated by the inquiring judge. The GPU trials have a thoroughly inquisitorial character; that is the simplest secret of the confessions."

The whole political atmosphere of the Soviet Union is impregnated with the spirit of the Inquisition. Have you read Andre Gide's little book, "Return from the U.S.S.R."? Gide is a friend of the Soviet Union, but not a lackey of the bureaucracy. Moreover, this artist has eyes. A little episode in Gide's books is of incalculable aid in understanding the Moscow trials. At the end of his trip Gide wished to send a telegram to Stalin, but not having received the inquisitorial education, he referred to Stalin with the simple democratic word "you". They refused to accept the telegram! The representatives of authority explained to Gide: "When writing to Stalin one must say: 'leader of the workers' or 'chieftain of the people' not simple democratic word 'you'."

Gide tried to argue. "Isn't Stalin above such flattery?" It was no use. They still refused to accept the telegram without the Byzantine flattery. At the very end Gide declared: "I submit to this wearisome battle, but disclaim all responsibility." This a universally recognized writer and honored guest was worn out in a few minutes and forced to sign not the telegram which he himself wanted to send, but that which was dictated to him by petty inquisitors. Let him who has a particle of imagination picture to himself, not a well-known traveller but an unfortunate soviet citizen, an oppositionist, isolated and persecuted, a pariah, who is constrained to write, not telegrams of salutation to Stalin, but dozens and scores of confessions of his crimes. Perhaps in this world there are many heroes who are capable of bearing all kinds of tortures, physical or moral, which are inflicted on themselves, their wives, their children. I do not know. My personal observations inform me that the capacities of the human nervous system are limited. Through the GPU Stalin can trap his victim in an abyss of black despair, humiliation, infamy, in such a manner that he takes upon himself the most monstrous crimes, with the prospect of imminent death or a feeble ray of hope for the future as the sole outcome. If, indeed, he does not contemplate suicide, which Tomsky preferred! Joffe earlier found the same way out, as well as two members of my military secretariat,

Glasman and Boutov, Zinoviev's secretary, Bogdan, my daughter Zinsida, and many dozens of others. Suicide or moral prostration: there is no other choice. But do not forget that in the prisons of the GPU even suicide is often an inaccessible luxury!

The Moscow trials do not dishonor the revolution, because they are the progeny of reaction. The Moscow trials do not dishonor the old generation of Bolsheviks; they only demonstrate that even Bolsheviks are made of flesh and blood, and they they do not resist endlessly when over their heads swings the pendulum of death. The Moscow trials dishonor the political regime which has conceived them; the regime of Bonapartism, without dishonor and without conscience! All of the executed died with curses on their lips for this regime.

Let him who wishes weep bitter tears because history moved ahead so perplexingly: two steps forward, one step back. But tears are of no avail. It is necessary, according to Spinoza's advice, not to laugh, not to cry, but to understand.

Who are the principal defendants? Old Bolsheviks, builders of the party, of the Soviet state, of the Red Army, of the Communist International. Who is the accuser against them? Vyshinsky, bourgeois lawyer, who called himself a Menshevik after the October revolution and joined the Bolsheviks after their definite victory. Who wrote the disgusting

libels about the accused in "Pravda"? Zalavsky, former pillar of a banking journal, whom Lenin treated in his articles only as a "rascal". The former editor of Pravda, Bukharin, is arrested. The pillar of "Pravda" is now Koltzov, bourgeois feuilletonist, who remained through the civil war in the camp of the Whites. Sokolnikov, a participant in the October revolution and the civil war is condemned as a traitor. Rakovsky awaits accusation. Sokolnikov and Rakovsky were ambassadors to London. Their place is now occupied by Maisky, Right Monshovk, who during the civil war was a minister of the White Government in Koltchak's territory. Troyanovsky, soviet ambassador to Washington, treats the Trotskyites as counter-revolutionaries. He himself, during the first years of the October revolution was a member of the Central committee of the Monshoviks and joined the Bolsheviks only after they began to distribute attractive posts. Before becoming ambassador Sokolnikov was People's Commissar of Finance. Who occupies that post today? Grinko, who in common with the White Guards struggled in the Committee of Welfare during 1917-18 against the soviets. One of the best soviet diplomatists was Joffe, first ambassador to Germany, who was forced to suicide by the prosecutions. Who replaced him in Berlin? First the repented oppositionist Krestinski, then Khintekuk, former Monshovik, a participant in the counter-revolutionary Committee of Welfare, and finally Suritz, who

also went through 1917 on the other side of the barricades. I could prolong this list indefinitely.

The grandiose alteration in personnel, especially striking in the provinces, have profound social causes. What are they? It is time, my listeners, it is high time, to recognize, finally, that a new aristocracy has been formed in the Soviet Union. The October revolution proceeded under the banner of equality. The bureaucracy is the embodiment of monstrous inequality. The Revolution destroyed the nobility. The bureaucracy creates a new gentry. The revolution destroyed titles and decorations. The new aristocracy produces marshals and generals.

The new aristocracy absorbs an enormous part of the national income. Its position before the people is deceitful and false. Its leaders are forced to hide the reality, to deceive the masses, to cloak itself, calling black white. The whole policy of the new aristocracy is a frame-up. The new constitution is nothing but a frame-up.

Fear of criticism is fear of the masses. The bureaucracy is afraid of the people. The lava of the revolution is not yet cold. The bureaucracy cannot crush the discontented and the critics by bloody repressions only because they demand a cutting down of privileges. That is why the false accusations against the opposition are not occasional acts but a system, which flows from



the present situation of the ruling caste.

Let us recall how the Thermidorians of the French Revolution acted toward the Jacobins. The historian Aulard writes: "The enemies did not satisfy themselves with the assassination of Robespierre and his friends; they calumniated them, representing them in the eyes of France as royalists, as people who had sold out to foreign countries." Stalin has invented nothing. He has simply replaced royalists with Fascists.

When the Stalinists call us "traitors," there is in that accusation not only hatred but also a certain sort of sincerity. They think that we betray the interests of the holy casts of generals and marshals, the only ones capable of "constructing socialism," but who in fact compromise the very idea of socialism. For our part, we consider the Stalinists as traitors to the interests of the soviet masses and of the world proletariat. It is absurd to explain such a furious struggle by personal motives. It is a question not only of different programs, but also of different social interests which clash in an increasingly hostile fashion.

"And what is your general diagnosis?" , you will ask me. "What is your prognosis?" I said before: My speech is devoted only to the Moscow trials. The social diagnosis and prognosis form the content of my new book.

But in two words I will tell you what I think.

The fundamental acquisitions of the October Revolution, the new forms of property which permits the development of the productive forces, are not yet destroyed, but they have already come into irreconcilable conflict with the political despotism. Socialism is impossible without the independent activity of the masses and the flourishing of the human personality. Stalinism tramples on both. An open revolutionary conflict between the people and the new despotism is inevitable. Stalin's regime is doomed. Will the capitalist counter-revolution or workers' democracy replace it? History has not yet decided this question. The decision depends upon the activity of the world proletariat.

If we admit for a moment that Facism will triumph in Spain, and thereby also in France, the soviet country, surrounded by a Facist ring, would be doomed to further degeneration, which must extend from the political superstructure to the economic foundations. In other words, the debacle of the European proletariat would probably signify the crushing of the Soviet Union.

If on the contrary the toiling masses of Spain overcome Facism, if the working-class of France definitely chooses the path of its liberation, then the oppressed masses of the Soviet Union will straighten their

backbones and raise their heads! But the triumph of soviet democracy will not occur by itself. It depends also upon you. The masses need your help. The first aid is to tell them the truth.

The question is: to aid the demoralized bureaucracy against the people, or the progressive forces of the people against the bureaucracy. The Moscow trials are a signa. Woe to them who do not heed! The Reichstag trial surely had a great importance. But it concerned only vile Facism, this embodiment of all the vices of darkness and barbarism. The Moscow trials are perpetrated under the banner of socialism. We will not concede this banner to the masters of falsehood! If our generation happens to be too weak to establish socialism over the earth, we will hand the spotless banner down to our children. The struggle which is in the offing transcends by far the importance of individuals, factions, and parties. It is the struggle for the future of all mankind. It will be severe. It will be lengthy. Who seeks physical comfort and spiritual calm, let him step aside. In time of reaction it is more convenient to lean on the bureaucracy than on the truth. But all those for whom the word socialism is not a hollow sound but the content of their moral life -- forward! Neither threats nor persecutions, nor violations can stop us.

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Be it even over our bleaching bones, the truth will triumph! We will blaze the trail for it. It will conquer! Under all the severe blows of fate, I shall be happy, as in the best days of my youth, if together with you I can contribute to its victory! Because, my friends, the highest human happiness is not the exploitation of the present but the cooperation of the future.

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